

The First International Conference on Comparative Austronesian Linguistics: Oceanic

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THIS article is the second of two reports on the First International Conference on Comparative Austronesian Linguistics held in Honolulu, Hawaii, January 2-7, 1974. The first report summarized Western Austronesian studies; this one summarizes the twenty-six papers dealing with the Oceanic area. Both reports follow the same organization scheme. Three papers summarized here deal with phonological reconstruction, five deal with subgrouping, eight deal with special problems in specific languages, none involve purely sociological conditions, two deal with contact between Austronesian and non-Austronesian languages, one deals with the possible relation of Japanese, and one deals with dispersal of Oceanic languages. The last section gives a list of contributors.

The reactions of participants at the conference are omitted, except that it should be noted that the Oceanic Subgroup is by now well established. No objections to this hypothesis were raised. Those with reservations would probably object to the philosophical basis of subgrouping in general rather than to assignment of all Austronesian languages east of Geelvink Bay and east of Guam to the Oceanic Subgroup.

1 RECONSTRUCTION

1.1 *Phonological*

1.1.1 *Eric P. Hamp* 'Prenasalization in Eastern Oceanic'

Eric Hamp reinterprets the data supporting some of Andrew Pawley's reconstruction of Proto-Eastern Oceanic phonology. The major claims involve realignment of correspondence sets for *s and *ns. Supporting arguments come from parallels

within Eastern Oceanic and from comparable developments in Irish and other European languages. Similar evidence is used to favor reconstruction of *kw and *ɲw in lieu of *pw and *mw.

1.1.2 Charles F. Hockett 'The Reconstruction of Proto-Fijian-Polynesian'

This paper involves the comparison of Fijian (Bau) words with Proto-Polynesian reconstructions. The less obvious and therefore more interesting sound correspondences are as follows:

PFP	s	ns	y	ʔ	l	nl	r	nr
Bau	c	s	c	#/y	l	dr	r	dr
PNP	h	s	#	ʔ	l	l	r	r

Three kinds of evidence in Fijian support the equations for *s and *ns: (1) The restriction on stem-final/suffix-initial consonant, (2) parallel of *f > v and *s > c [ð], and (3) in nasal/oral doublets the nasal grade appears to be intensive or augmentative. /s/ patterns like a nasal grade, for example, /cere/ 'open the hand', /sere/ 'untie, let go'.

This reasoning is extended to justify *nl, which gives symmetry to the set of nasal/oral pairs.

The larger part of this paper is devoted to a catalogue of 555 proposed Proto-Fijian-Polynesian reconstructions, which should be of interest to scholars of several fields beyond linguistics.

1.1.3 W. W. Schuhmacher '“Dempwolff's Law” Reconstructed in the Framework of Phonological Distinctive Features'

Dempwolff proposed a neurophysiological explanation for the backing of consonants. This general process has come to be known as Dempwolff's Law. Schuhmacher seeks a systematic phonological explanation independent of phonetics but rather based on strength, that is, resistance to phonological change.

He catalogues the changes ʔ → Ø, k → ʔ, t → k, h → Ø, s → h, f → h, n → ɲ as weakening; changes ɲ → n, ɲ → k, r → l as strengthening; changes l → k/ʔ, r → Ø, f → ʔ, s → ʔ, ɲ → ʔ as combinations. He then claims that “Dempwolff's Law” is essentially a weakening process with occasional strengthening of a nonstop to a stop.

1.2 SYNTACTIC

1.2.1 Paul G. Chapin 'Proto-Polynesian *ai'

Paul Chapin examines the various functions of *ai* in nearly twenty Polynesian languages. Much of the paper is devoted to documenting that *ai* refers to another phrase, which usually precedes the verb and which is in a case other than nominative. The extensive, if subtle, similarities among modern Polynesian languages are explained as developments from Proto-Polynesian.

The implications for the theory of grammar are discussed. Among these are the distinction between the oblique, “marked” cases as a class and the direct, unmarked

Nominative; and, possible hierarchy of cases distinguishing "actants" (Agentive, Dative, Accusative) and "determinants" (Locative, Temporal, Instrumental, etc.).

1.2.2 *Sandra Chung* 'Nominalizations in Proto-Polynesian'

This paper deals with syntax and semantics of nominalization and possession in fifteen Polynesian languages grouped as follows: TONGIC: Tonga and Niva; SAMOIC: Samoa, Futuna, Vaitupu, and Pukapuka; OUTLIER: Kapingamarangi, Nukuoro, Sikaiana, and Luangiua; EASTERN: Maori, Penrhyn, Tahiti, and Hawai'i.

The Proto-Polynesian nominalizing suffix is reconstructed as *-Cana with Maori reflecting most of the original consonant alterations which were specialized or lost elsewhere.

The possessive marking distinguished between agentive possession *a and objective possession *o.

Further, Proto-Polynesian had three basic verb classes: transitive, intransitive, and "semitransitive" verbs of emotion or perception. The interaction of these three grammatical devices had different results in different languages. Sandra Chung presents evidence that the present Maori system is closest to Proto-Polynesian. Other languages have increased semantic constraints on these processes as in Samoa or have neutralized contrasts as in Tahiti.

1.2.3 *Ross Clark* 'Transitivity and Case in Eastern Oceanic Languages'

This paper focuses on the earlier SVO order which develops into VSO patterns of Polynesia.

The first stage of the argumentation centers on agreement marking within the verbphrase constituent in the Solomons and New Hebrides. With addition of data from Fiji, the Proto-Eastern Oceanic system emerges as:

"Transitive": Subject and object are specified; with agreement for each in verb phrase: SVO.

"Intransitive": Object is unspecified; with verb-subject agreement: SV.

"Pseudo-Passive": Subject is unspecified; with verb-object agreement: VO.

Clark argues that "Transitive" pattern with pronoun subject evolves into Proto-Polynesian VO pattern with subject and object agreement. "Transitive" with nonpronoun subject is omitted in favor of expanded "Pseudo-Passive" VOS with only object agreement on the verb; later the subject acquires overt case marking. The "Intransitive" pattern expands into four patterns.

Reasons are given to favor the proposed changes over earlier formulations by Hale, by Hohepa, by Lynch, and by Tchekhoff. Some overlap is found with observations by Milner.

Also included is a discussion of theoretical notions such as "ergative," "passive," and process of "syntactic change."

1.2.4 *John Lynch* 'Verbal Aspects of Possession in Melanesian Languages'

In Melanesian languages there are two basic possessive constructions: *Inalienable*, characterized by a suffix on the possessed noun which indicates person and number

of the possessor, and *alienable*, characterized by attaching the same kind of suffix to a possessive morpheme which usually precedes the possessed noun. The alienable construction may use several possessive morphemes, which distinguish edible, drinkable, and other possible types of possession.

Lynch examines the syntax and morphology of possession in Aroma (Central District, Papua New Guinea), Suau (Milne Bay District, PNG), Lenakel (Tanna Island, New Hebrides), and standard Fijian.

Two alternatives are proposed. The gender solution involves classifying nouns according to possessive construction or possessive morpheme cooccurrences. The verbal solution involves abstract underlying verbs:

For inalienables 'my X' derives from

X [RELATE TO]_{Verb} me

For alienables 'my X' derives from

X [I [HAVE]_{Verb} X]_{Relative Clause} [RELATE TO]_{Verb} me

with the surface forms to be derived by special rules of nominalization.

Lynch concludes that the best solution is basically verbal modified in the direction of gender classes.

1.2.5 Andrew Pawley 'Some Problems in Proto-Oceanic Grammar'

Andrew Pawley first reviews phonological criteria for the Oceanic Subgroup, then puts together grammatical details from four regions: New Guinea area; Micronesia, Polynesia, and central New Hebrides area; New Caledonia area; and North Solomons, Bismarck Archipelago area. Then a sketch of Proto-Oceanic grammar is deduced.

Pawley concludes that the grammatical evidence supports the Oceanic hypothesis, but first-order subgroups of Austronesian are required before this can be fully evaluated. He goes on to make explicit twenty putative innovations exclusively shared within Oceanic.

2 SUBGROUPING

2.1 Byron Bender 'Parallelisms in the Morphophonemics of Several Micronesian Languages'

In the hope of establishing subgrouping criteria, Byron Bender discusses three processes that are shared by Micronesian languages:

1. /a/ raising in partial assimilation to /i/
2. /a/ raising in dissimilation to /a/
3. long vowels in shorter forms of words

The first process is rather expected and could have evolved independently.

Rather more striking is process 2, illustrated by the following examples.

Marshallese:	/maj/ 'eye'	/mejan/ 'his eye'
	/daŋ/ 'forehead'	/deŋan/ 'his forehead'

Even in loans: Japanese /tama/
Marshallese /teŋah/ 'light bulb'

The process is also active in Woleaian. Traces of it are found in some Trukese dialects, also Puluwat and Satawal, and possibly in Nauruan. This unusual rule that changes /a/ to /e/ before /Ca/ points to a period of shared history.

The third process was thought to be compensation of vowel length for shortness of words in monosyllabic forms. More detailed analyses show that the rule applies in two-syllable forms as in Gilbertese. It may or may not have evolved independently.

2.2 *Ann Chowning* 'Milke's "New Guinea Cluster": The Evidence from Northwest New Britain'

Chowning collates material from her personal knowledge of two languages of northwest New Britain, Kove (west of Talasea) and Lakalai (east of Talasea), in order to evaluate claims about their relation to languages in New Guinea.

As the first step, both are compared with Proto-Oceanic. Neither has diverged very far in its phoneme inventory, but a number of differences have developed. Then Milke's phonological criteria for grouping both languages with those of the north coast of New Guinea are considered.

Lexical evidence does not reveal any great similarities between Lakalai and Kove. Comparisons between Kove and the few words available from Manam are more promising.

In lieu of evaluating grammatical evidence for subgrouping, Chowning has provided an outline of Lakalai grammar as the basis for future comparisons.

In conclusion, the author finds considerable overlap between her findings and subgroupings proposed by Milke, Hooley, and Capell. In other words, the languages from Manam along the coast of New Guinea on to Siassi, and along the north coast of west New Britain up to but not including Lakalai, are probably all members of what Hooley called the Siassi Family.

2.3 *Geoffrey S. Nathan* 'Nauruan in the Austronesian Language Family'

Nathan has sorted through the phonetically difficult Nauruan language and found a complex phonemic system. He has been able to show that in spite of loss of earlier consonants, at least in essentials Nauruan has developed from Proto-Oceanic in ways similar to Micronesian languages. The possessive system is shown to be similar to Oceanic systems, with a "construct" (noun compounding) form and a set of possessive classifiers very similar to Micronesian patterns.

Nauruan and Micronesian languages do not have a uniquely shared development pattern. Nonetheless, some evidence points to classifying Nauruan as Micronesian and to dispelling forever the suspicion that Nauruan is non-Austronesian.

2.4 *Ho-min Sohn* 'Relative Clause Formation in Micronesian Languages'

This paper starts with a catalogue of information about relative clauses in Micronesian. Sohn goes on to observe differences among various languages and to tabulate positive and negatively shared features as follows:

Woleai						
8	Truk					
4	5	Mokil				
12	10	8	Marshall			
6	8	12	10	Kusaie		
10	8	10	8	6	Gilberts	

These isoglosses are somewhat at odds with subgrouping based on other kinds of evidence.

2.5 Hiroshi Sugita 'Comparison of Verb-Object Relationships in Micronesian Languages'

Hiroshi Sugita begins with discussion of the syntax and semantics of two verb classes in Trukese:

1. *Definite transitive verbs*, which have object agreement (e.g., /pe-kiiy/ 'shoot-it'), and take objects of defined or limited extent or quantity which may or may not be specific. Syntactic form of object may be definite or quantified.
2. *Indefinite transitive verbs*, which do not have object suffixes (e.g., /ppek/ 'shoot'), take objects, which indicate part of a less limited supply. Syntactic form of object may be definite or indefinite.

The corresponding structures in Kusaiean and Ponapean express a more syntactic notion of incorporated object. The corresponding structures in Marshallese express the Trukese distinction of partitive vs. exhaustive. This grammatical isogloss is at odds with phonological and lexical data which show a close relation between Trukese and Ponapean.

2.6 Darrell T. Tryon 'Linguistic Subgrouping in the New Hebrides: A Preliminary Report'

Darrell Tryon completed the first systematic survey of all languages in the New Hebrides in 1971. His earlier report was a useful inventory of the 115 languages that were found. This report is a first approximation at subgrouping.

Based mainly on lexicostatistics, the following subgroups are suggested.

1. East Santo Group (6 languages)
2. Erromanga Group (2 languages)
3. Tanna Group (5 languages)
4. Aneityun Group (1 language)
5. North-Central New Hebrides Group (98 languages)

Group 5 is made up of at least six groups:

- 5a. North New Hebrides Subgroup (53 languages), which covers all of Torres and Banks Islands, most of Espiritu Santo, northern Pentecost, and all the islands in between.

- 5b. Ambrym Subgroup (7 languages), which covers South Pentecost, Ambrym, and Paama.
- 5c. North Malekula Subgroup (12 languages)
- 5d. South Malekula Subgroup (18 languages)
- 5e. Epi Subgroup (6 languages)
- 5f. Efate Subgroup (2 languages)

Groups 1-5 show little cohesion among themselves, with the lowest percentage of cognates between Sakau in Group 1 and Lenakel in Group 3 at 15%.

Comparative morphological data on possessive constructions, numeral systems, and complexity of verb morphology partially support the proposed subgroups.

Since delivering this paper, Tryon has returned to the New Hebrides for further fieldwork.

3 SPECIAL PROBLEMS

3.1 *David G. Arms* 'Whence the Fijian Transitive Endings?'

Most Fijian words are two syllables long. The transitive form of verbs generally reveals a third consonant. David Arms presents evidence that each of these third consonants has a semantic value connected with it. For example, /c/ 'gentle contact, bodily function'. In other words, the phonetic value of the consonant is predictable on the basis of the meaning of the resulting transitive verb in about 1000 out of 1680 cases. Arms discusses cooccurrence restrictions on Fijian morpheme structures and then offers two historical explanations. He winds up favoring a morphemic solution which suggests that the third syllable consonants may have been separate morphemes even as far back as Proto-Austronesian times.

3.2 *George W. Grace* 'Research on the Position of the New Caledonian Languages: A Progress Report'

George Grace has defined the notion *aberrant Melanesian languages* as those languages which show sufficient basic characteristics to be classified as Austronesian, but show low cognate densities when compared with other members of the family. This paper discusses aberrant languages of southern New Caledonia. The strategy is that if the nearly opaque histories of these languages can be sorted out, similar explanatory solutions can be achieved in aberrant languages of other areas.

Languages like Canala [xãřăci:] have developed a system of twenty-six consonant and eighteen vowel distinctions with mostly monosyllabic morphemes. All this comes from the Proto-Oceanic system of twenty consonant and five vowel distinctions with mostly bisyllabic morphemes.

Not surprisingly, then, few Canala words can, with confidence, be designated as reflexes of Proto-Oceanic reconstructions. The list of thirty such items is thus of considerable interest. Grace has had some more success comparing Canala with its neighbors, but the abundance of correspondence-sets points to complex recent history. Research continues but at an understandably slow pace.

3.3 *Sheldon P. Harrison* 'Reduplication in Micronesian Languages'

This paper focuses on patterns of reduplication in Mokilese. Evidence is provided to establish that there are two basic functions: inflectional and derivational, leftward and rightward respectively.

Leftward reduplication is characterized by adding a prefix which matches the first part of the base, usually CVC-. Rightward reduplication is characterized by adding a suffix which matches the last two syllables of the base, usually -CVCV.

Considerable attention is given to justifying rightward reduplication, which derives intransitive or stative verbs.

Leftward reduplication expresses aspect. The simple base form of verbs expresses denotive aspect. Progressive aspect is expressed through left reduplication of the base of verb. Continuative (or durative) aspect is expressed by reduplicating again. The contrast between continuative and progressive aspects is subtle and has led to gaps in some paradigms.

Comparative evidence suggests that in the Proto-Micronesian stage a leftward (CV-) pattern and a rightward (-CVCV) pattern were both operative, probably with a single general function of "distributive" or "manifestation."

3.4 *Kee-Dong Lee* 'Verbal Aspect in Kusaiean and Ponapean'

In Kusaiean, there is a class of eight verbal suffixes: /lah/ 'away', /acng/ 'to (a point)', /yah/ 'down', /ack/ 'up', /ma/ 'to speaker', /oht/ 'hence', /elihk/ 'to different directions', and /eni/ 'to one direction'.

Lee has shown that when used with verbs of motion, these suffixes express the expected directional meaning. When used with nonmotion verbs, the suffixes express completive and resultative meanings. There are striking similarities to the nearly idiomatic verb particle structures in English. Ponapean has a very similar set of verbal suffixes.

Lee concludes his discussion with a brief look at similar forms in Proto-Oceanic, Tongan, and Samoan.

3.5 *Peter C. Lincoln* 'Some Possible Implications of POC *t as /l/ in Gedaged'

This paper is addressed to a single problem. Considerable background information is provided as to geography and subgrouping of Gedaged as well as an outline of the history of the Gedaged sound system. Detailed evidence on the development of *t and *l is given, revealing that the regular reflexes are /t/ and /l/ respectively. A table of twelve cognates in five varieties is presented as an implicational scale, revealing a wavelike spread of words with *t reflected as /l/. The source of these words appears to be some Rai Coast language east of Madang. This interpretation precludes modification of reconstructions of words involved.

3.6 *George B. Milner* 'It Is Aspect (Not Voice) Which Is Marked in Samoan'

Milner develops an approach to Samoan grammar that blends the cautions of Whorf, the strategies of Chomsky followers, the insights of Bloomfield, and the observations of Martinet and Tchekoff. He discusses mode, aspect, and construction type.

The crux of his presentation is aspect in Samoan: The *perfective* aspect is formally marked by verb suffixes (-a, -ina) which stress the result of the action. The *imperfective* aspect is indicated formally by the absence of verb suffixes. The emphasis is on the action itself rather than on the result.

The author (following others) goes on to distinguish between verbs with an actor bias and those with goal bias.

The paper concludes with a characterization of the two construction types: objective and ergative.

3.7 Kenneth Rehg 'On the History of Ponapean Phonology'

This paper opens with geographic identification of the language and its varieties, followed by a sketch of the sound system of twelve consonants and six vowels. The canonical forms are described by application of final consonant and final vowel deletions. Notable consonant developments are *(n)s > /t/ and *t > /s/, typical of Micronesian; *nd, *nt > /tʰ/, specific to Ponapean; and *ŋp, *mp > /pw/, *ŋm > /mw/.

The development of vowels is described by rules several of which are still productive. Rehg appends a list of 162 putative Proto-Oceanic-Ponapean cognates.

3.8 Claudie Tchekhoff 'On the Inapplicability of the Active-Passive Dichotomy in Certain Austronesian Languages'

This paper starts with the development of the following hierarchy. The *active-passive* opposition relies on *transitive*, such that *intransitive* verbs are neither *active* nor *passive*. Similarly, at the next level, the *transitive-intransitive* opposition relies on *accusative* construction. Thus, an *ergative* construction (opposite of accusative) has neither *transitive* nor *intransitive* verbs. And by extension, an *ergative* construction can have no *active* or *passive* voice but is voiceless.

The rest of the paper is devoted to demonstrating that Tongan is basically ergative in its verbal and even possessive structures, and thus cannot be said to have active or passive voice.

4 SOCIOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS (discussed in next section)

5 CONTACT PHENOMENA

5.1 Michael L. Forman 'Philippine Languages in Contact, Honolulu Radio Station K.I.S.A.'

Michael Forman examines the sociological setting of language use on radio station K.I.S.A. The language input appears to be English and Philippine languages (principally Tagalog). Samples of the language output defy such neat categorization. The problem goes deeper than names and loanwords. In looking at similar data beyond the radio context we are given a sample utterance *Sayang da kiln*. Can we assign this to a particular language? One informant participating in the source conversation claimed that it was an English sentence. Evidence to the contrary is quite obvious. And still Forman's questions remain: "What is a 'system'? (Labov 1971); How many systems are employed on K.I.S.A. (one or more)?; If more than

one system is in use on K.I.S.A., how does an investigator know which system he is involved with at any given moment? . . .”

5.2 *Donald C. Laycock* ‘Sissano, Warapu, and Melanesian Pidginization’

This paper opens with discussion of earlier theories of language contact in Melanesia. Then follows an outline of possible patterns of Austronesian (AN)–non-Austronesian (NAN) contact.

Laycock suggests that the patterns or combinations can be unravelled using the comparative method; however, this approach is limited in practice by incomplete AN reconstruction, inadequate NAN reconstruction, and gaps in description of crucial languages (some have not been reported at all).

The remainder of the paper is an examination of a particular case of contact, between Sissano (AN) and Warapu (NAN) in the Sepik District. Phonemic inventories are very similar. Nearly all lexical borrowings (10% of 175 basic words) are from Sissano to Warapu. There are two hints of pidginization: use of generic classifiers in Warapu compounds and a binary (rather than quinary) number system in Sissano. Contrary to his expectations, Laycock found that the influence was quite one-sided from AN to NAN.

6 NON-AUSTRONESIAN

6.1 *James R. Solomon* ‘Japanese and the Other Austronesian Languages, A Survey of the Literature’

This paper is presented in four sections. The first cites Miller’s eclipsing posture that precludes the possibility of an Austronesian substratum.

The second section quotes from the works of several scholars who claim early Austronesian influence on Japanese. Murayama Shichirō is their current spokesman. Earlier theories of a connection to Austro-Asiatic languages favored by Schmidt have somewhat less popularity. Some scholars cited base the claim of Austronesian influence on linguistic evidence; others rely on cultural or archaeological evidence. Most damaging to this school of thought are a few works which show “a level of scholarship which need not detain us” (Miller’s wording).

In the third section, Solomon cites the cautions of Miller and Jespersen about the possible weakness of substrata theory as an explanation.

In his concluding remarks, he quotes Miller’s more recent suggestion that we should examine the possibility of Austronesian influence on Japanese.

7 DISPERSAL

7.1 *Andrew Pawley and Roger Green* ‘Dating the Dispersal of the Oceanic Languages’

This paper is characterized in several places by attempts to make claims and reasons for these claims explicit. Thus the authors start out by defining *Near Oceania*, comprising New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and the Solomon Islands as far east as San Cristobal—lands relatively unisolated by sea. *Remote Oceania* is the rest of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia, characterized by archipelagoes isolated from Near Oceania by more than 350 km of open seas.

The authors then review various archaeological reports in search of evidence to date the arrival of man, specifically speakers of Austronesian languages, on to the various islands of Near and Remote Oceania. Then they draw cultural inferences from a body of linguistic data made up of subgrouping hypotheses and reconstructions of vocabulary items for four stages. Continuities and discontinuities of vocabulary are traced through three tables of reconstructions: for land resources (32 items), for sea resources (36 items), and for artifacts (13 items).

At this point the authors propose definitions and principles which are then applied to the problem of relating geography, language, and archaeology in an explicit fashion.

Among their conclusions, we find the suggestion that Proto-Oceanic split into various groups more than 5000 years ago, and Proto-Austronesian would then have split into various groups (one of them Oceanic) about 6000 years ago.

8 CONTRIBUTORS

The following is an alphabetical list of contributors whose papers are summarized in the preceding sections. The numbers after the names refer to the subsection where the summary may be found.

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